

CHANGE OF COMMAND -- Naval Hospital Portsmouth, Va
28 May 1975

Vice Admiral Donald L. Custis, MC, USN
Navy Surgeon General

WE ARE HERE TO HONOR ADMIRAL PAUL MAHIN WHO, AS HE RELINQUISHES HIS FINAL COMMAND, ALSO COMPLETES A DISTINGUISHED AND MERITORIOUS CAREER. THE SUM OF HIS SERVICE REPRESENTS A GREAT PROFIT TO THE NAVY AND TO THE UNITED STATES.

OVER A SPAN OF 33 YEARS HE HAS EXCELLED AS A SURGEON, SCHOLAR, TEACHER AND NAVAL OFFICER. HE HAS GIVEN OF HIMSELF UNDER FIRE IN TWO WARS - FROM OKINAWA TO VIETNAM. DOZENS OF SURGICAL RESIDENTS HAVE KNOWN HIM AS "CHIEF", AND FOUR OF OUR FINEST HOSPITALS HAVE BEEN HIS TO COMMAND. HE HAS BEEN ONE OF THE MOST QUALIFIED AND EFFECTIVE OF OUR MEDICAL INSPECTOR GENERALS.

JUST AS HE HAS EARNED HIS TRIUMPHS, HE HAS TAKEN HIS SHARE OF HARSHIP POSTS AND HANDLED HIS QUOTA OF HOT POTATOES.

BECAUSE HE IS A LEADER AND A DOER, MANY ARE IN HIS DEBT - I NOT AMONG THE LEAST OF THEM. ON TWO OCCASIONS I INHERITED THE PRODUCTS OF HIS UNUSUAL TALENT; A SURGICAL SERVICE AT PHILADELPHIA, AND THE NAVY'S BUSY HOSPITAL IN DANANG. IT WAS UNDER HIS TUTELAGE I FIRST ENTHUSED TO EXECUTIVE MEDICINE. HE HAS BEEN A VALUED MENTOR AND FRIEND.

I KNOW I SPEAK FOR EVERYONE HERE ASSEMBLED IN EXTENDING TO PAUL AND TOBY OUR GRATITUDE, COMMENDATION AND BEST WISHES FOR CONTINUED HAPPINESS.

THERE COULD BE NO MORE WORTHY SUCCESSORS AT PORTSMOUTH THAN BILL AND JOEANN JACOBY.

ALTHOUGH ACCORDED EARLY RECOGNITION FOR HIS CLINICAL EXPERTISE, BILL JACOBY HAS CLEARLY PROVED, THROUGH HIS VERSATILITY, THE SERENDIPITY OF HIS FLAG SELECTION. UNDER HIS LEADERSHIP AND WITH THE SUPPORT OF THIS FINE STAFF, THE OUTSTANDING RECORD OF THIS GREAT TEACHING CENTER WILL BE SUSTAINED. UNDER THE LEGACY OF SUCH AS JOE YON, WILL ARENTZEN AND PAUL MAHIN THE REPUTATION OF NAVY HEALTH CARE IN THE TIDEWATER HAS ALWAYS BEEN, AND IN SPITE OF CONTRACTED RESOURCES WILL CONTINUE TO BE THAT OF QUALITY AND CONCERN.

ALL OF US SHARE THE CONCERN THAT QUANTITY DEGRADATION OF MEDICAL SUPPORT IS BUT ONE FACET OF THE NATION'S DEFENSE FORCE DEBILITATION - FOSTERED BY FIRST SOCIETY'S POST-WAR ANTIPATHY AND THEN BY ITS APATHY. IF THE NAVY IS TO DO ITS JOB, THE MAINTENANCE OF MEDICAL CARE CAPABILITY IS JUST AS IMPORTANT AS SHIPBUILDING AND AIRCRAFT PROCUREMENT. THE HUMANITARIAN ELEMENT ASIDE, NAVY MEDICINE'S PRIMARY MISSION IS THE COLDLY PRAGMATIC ONE OF SUSTAINING THE MANPOWER BEHIND THE NAVAL GUNS.

THUS QUANTITY HEALTH CARE RESOURCES ARE AN ESSENTIAL MILITARY LOGISTIC REQUIREMENT.

THE ASSURANCE OF QUALITY IN OUR PRIMARY MISSION COMES FROM CONSCIENTIOUS ATTENTION TO OUR SECONDARY MISSIONS - INCLUDING TEACHING, RESEARCH AND A PROPER PATIENT MIX FOR HEALTH CARE DELIVERY. WE HAVE EVERY DESIRE TO EXPAND THE LEGISLATIVELY MANDATED MEDICAL CARE FOR THE RETIRED AND DEPENDENT. WE PLEDGE TO ALL OUR BENEFICIARIES THAT WE WILL DO OUR VERY BEST, TO THE EXTENT OF LIMITED RESOURCES, WHILE EVER STRIVING TO INCREASE THAT CAPABILITY.

FINALLY, I WISH TO EXPRESS PUBLICLY MY APPRECIATION TO THE FINE STAFF OF NAVY HEALTH PROFESSIONALS IN THE GREATER PORTSMOUTH AREA FOR THEIR TREMENDOUS MOTIVATION AND ACCOMPLISHMENT UNDER ADVERSITY. WE ARE JUSTIFIABLY PROUD OF THEM AND HOPE, FOR THEIR SAKE ALSO, THE DAY MAY NOT BE FAR AWAY WHEN THE CRISIS ENVIRONMENT UNDER WHICH THEY OPERATE CAN BE RESOLVED AND THE LEVEL SUPPORT THEY SO RICHLY DESERVE MAY BE PROVIDED.